

11-30-1976

Interview no. 277

Father Alfred Galvan

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Interview with Father Alfred Galvan by Jesus Aragon, Jr., 1976, "Interview no. 277," Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Father Alfred Galvan
INTERVIEWER: Jesus Aragon, Jr.
PROJECT: Class Project
DATE OF INTERVIEW: November 30, 1976
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted

TAPE NO.: 277
TRANSCRIPT NO.: 277
TRANSCRIBER: Yolanda Snyder, Norma and Jesus Aragon, Jr.
DATE TRANSCRIBED: December 1, 1976

BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

(Priest) Born in El Paso in 1939; attended Morehead Grammar School and graduated from Cathedral High School; attended Texas Western College (UTEP) for one year; earned a degree in Theology from the Seminary of St. Thomas, and was ordained in 1965; served three years in the Air Force.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Biography; religion, politics, and ethnic relations.

1 hour; 22 pages

This is an interview with Father Galvan by Jesus Aragon in his office at 518 Gallagher, in Santa Lucia Church, on November 30, 1976.

A: Could you give us some background about yourself, where you were born, etc.?

G: I was born here in El Paso in 1939 at Hotel Dieu Hospital. We lived at the corner of Campbell and Nevada. I went to Morehead Grammar School, which was right across the street from us. From there I went to Cathedral High; that's where I thought about becoming a priest. From Cathedral I did go to Texas Western for a year. I received a scholarship in music, and I was vacillating between going into the priesthood or not. I figured that one year as a freshman at Texas Western would determine it, and it did, because after that, I decided that that's what I did want to be-- a priest. I hadn't had any Latin so I was sent to the school of St. _____ in Massachusetts. That was the first time I had been that far from El Paso. It was quite an experience to see something different from the desert, mountains, and all that. Anyway, I was there for a year. Then I took my studies in philosophy in Denver, Colorado, at the Seminary of Saint Thomas, the seminary which a number of priests from El Paso have attended. I have a degree in Theology.

At ordination--I was ordained in 1965--I was assigned to Our Lady of the Light on Delta Street. Father Roland was the pastor, and I was his assistant. I was there for about a year and a half. From there, I went to Marfa, Texas, and was there for about five years. I had wanted to serve in the military for a long time, so after that and with the Bishop's permission, I was a chaplain for three years in the Air Force. I left the Air Force in '73 and came back home to El Paso. I was assigned to Santa Lucia, and that's where I've been a little bit over three years.

A: How was it in Marfa? How were the people over there?

G: Well, as far as people were concerned, there was an attitude of much openness and friendliness--much more so than you find in El Paso. People's homes were always open to you. You knew everyone and everyone knew you. It used to be great fun to see who was going to miss mass on Sunday, because you were expecting them. /Laughter/.

A: Were those three years that you spent in the Air Force beneficial?

G: They were extremely beneficial from this point of view: that the people that I worked with--by that I mean all the people involved in the various facets that pertained to the service--were all intelligent, very hard-working, very enthusiastic people, and very organized. And /organization/ was one of the things that I did not have in my background; I was a very disorganized individual. And the way the chapel operations were held, everything had to be organized to the last letter; because you were involved not only with the Catholic program, but you also shared the facilities with the Protestant chaplains as well as the Jewish chaplains. That involved thousands of people, and you just couldn't do whatever you wanted to; everything had to be in cooperation with everyone else. So the organization was tremendous--the meetings and what not behind it. So when I came here to Santa Lucia, all of this experience that I gained, especially in organization, had been very effective, very effective.

A: Could we go back to what we were talking about at the beginning, about your family having to leave México, having to settle here as a result of the Revolution.

G: They left in 1911, 1912 I think it was. They came to El Paso because of the Revolution. My grandfather was the Presidente Municipal de Santa Bárbara, Chihuahua; and as that, he was part of the federal government organization. They left and they lost everything. At the time they came,

they thought the right side would win the Revolution; and they didn't.

/Laughter/. They had no intention of staying permanently. My grandmother always used to say that at that time, when you crossed over, you were asked if you wanted to stay. And I think that almost automatically you could become a citizen. It was certainly easier than it is now. At the time they crossed over, they said they were just here to wait out the Revolution as refugees, and /that/ when things settled down, they would return; but they didn't. So my family has been here since the time of the Revolution.

A: Father, what was the Anglo-Mexican situation like as you saw it in Marfa, the Air Force, and here in El Paso?

G: Well, let me go back to the first time that I realized there was a difference between Mexicans and Anglos. I was 17 years old; I /had/ just graduated from Cathedral High and was going to Texas Western. At that time, 1956, Raymond Telles was running for Mayor. We were very close friends, the Telleses and the Galvans, so I went down to campaign headquarters and helped out and everything went fine. At one time, Ted Bender, I think, was also going to be alderman. Something had come up about the religion of individuals, because there was a Jew on the ticket--Ted Bender. But that was covered over because it didn't matter what the religion was; most of them were Catholics, one Protestant, and then Ted was a Jew. But the thing that really struck me was /this/: I was handing out little political propaganda outside the voting area. This /happened/ right at Morehead School where I had gone /to grade school/. I handed one of these little things /to/ a nice, little old lady with here hair well done, very distinguished looking and all that. And she said, "Me vote for a Mexican? A Mexican mayor of El Paso? Never!" I was kind of stunned,

'cause that was the first time that that had cropped up, that I heard something like that just face to face, especially from a person who looked so sweet. She looked like somebody's grandmother. But that was the only situation that I ever was part of. And I figured that had a lot to do with the racial situation, but even so much more the political, which always brings up anything that you're against--like even now with Carter and Ford and the Baptist situation.

In Marfa, it was a very different kind of situation--the Mexican population is very Anglosized. They don't have this sameness of being so close to the border for one thing, and they've lived in Marfa for generations. So you talk to the kids, and as far as they're concerned they don't see any racial or cultural distinctions or differences. For that matter, even their families /don't see any differences/. It was always very difficult to try and see that there was a distinction. Now, on the part of the Anglos there was. They always considered themselves... that there was a difference between them and the Mexicans. It was really funny, because the Mexicans couldn't see, but the Anglos could. I don't know if you're that familiar with many parts of West Texas. There are still some little towns in which there will be a church for the Anglos and there will be a church for the Mexicans--in Pecos and Kermit. But thank God Marfa wasn't /like that/. In Marfa there was only one church. There had been two churches in the history of Marfa--one for Anglos, one for Mexicans. But I think it was in the late '40's, early '50's that they tore down one of the churches and just had the one. So at least at Saint Mary's in Marfa, everybody worshipped together. What was really strange was the Baptist and Methodist. There was an Anglo Methodist and a Mexican Methodist, and there was an Anglo Baptist and a Mexican Baptist

Church. But as far as the Catholics were concerned, which we were by far the greatest number of people, [we only had one church]. I think Marfa had a population at that time of 2,200 people, and 1,200 were Catholic; so we were by far the majority. And I was very happy with that--at least in the way that the church was very influential in Marfa. Because, one, there was only the one church, so we didn't have that division that the religion already brought in. And secondly, we had all those 1,200 people at mass on Sunday, plus a few Episcopalians that would come every now and then.

There was one area that we did do something about. There was a parochial school in Marfa and there weren't any Anglo kids. Of course, there were very few Anglo Catholic families in Marfa, maybe about ten. A lot of these people that were Anglo Catholic families were not originally people from Marfa. They were mostly border patrol families coming into Marfa. And we wondered why there were no Anglo kids attending our school. Sister Bernadette and I--at that time, spring of '69, I was pastor--went to each Anglo Catholic family that had children of grammar school age. We asked them why their kids were not at Saint Mary's. And the answers were very revealing, because these were individuals who had come into Marfa, so they weren't part of the establishment, they weren't part of the old families or what not; they were new people. And several of them told us that they [had] heard of Marfa. You know how you investigate where you're going to move, what's there and what not, so at least you have some idea [of] what you're getting into. Several of the families said they knew there was a Catholic school, and they were delighted, they were happy. But they said [that] when they got to Marfa, they were told by their neighbors that you didn't send your kids to that school,

that that was just the school for the Mexican kids. Also, that everything was taught in Spanish because it was for the Mexican kids. Well, we set the record straight. And when we visited these families, we told them what the situation was: that it was a school for everybody; that even Protestant kids, if they wanted to come, were accepted. And we did have a couple of them. I think they were Methodist kids; their families wanted them to get a better education than /what/ you get at the public schools. So I was very happy that day. In a sense, we integrated Saint Mary's School in the fall of '69. It was remarkable, because every single family that we had talked to sent their kids to Saint Mary's in the fall. And it wasn't only a /better/ situation because it was a Catholic school, but it was basically a better school than Marfa Elementary because of the student-teacher ratio, too; the involvement and the care /and/ the participation--just a much better school. And /it was/ even academically centered, not in all /things/, because obviously we did not have all the things that the federal /and/ local government could give to the schools; but we made up in so many other areas. So that was a big step. And it was because of a misunderstanding, since there were so few Anglo Catholics, that they didn't send their kids there. And it just evolved after years and years that no Anglo kids went to Saint Mary's School. Well, that fall there were about ten or twelve Anglo kids, so it really made an impact.

As far as the Air Force was concerned, they just had people from all backgrounds--ethnic, religious, cultural, racial. It was very much, I think, what many people would like to see the United States of America be--a country where the people work together, live together, and share together. You'd walk into an office or you'd be at any kind of gathering,

and /you'd see/ Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Anglos, Italians, Japanese. It just didn't matter; people relate with you because of your compartmentalized background. They related to you because of what you could share or you could give, what you could do, what you could bring; and that's what determined /it/. So there wasn't any kind of situation that would negate anybody. It was a really good experience to see people. In fact, for me it was almost a kind of a...not a shock, but a novelty. I remember the first time I celebrated mass in the chapel at Cannon Air Force Base at Clovis, New Mexico. It was a novelty, because I was always used to Our Lady of the Light and Marfa, /where/ the church was full of people of Mexican background. And to go walk into a church and have it mostly Anglo, with a few Blacks, /it's/ just like /asking/, "Are these Catholics?" It was kind of an adjustment in that respect for me.

Even now at Santa Lucia, the majority of the people that come are Mexican. We do have our 12:00 mass. Because of what we offer here, what we do, I think we're rather unique from all the Catholic churches in El Paso. We do have people coming from all over the city, so this is a well integrated church. We're not at all like...not that I'm going to say anything derogatory, but there's quite a difference between, say, Sacred Heart or San Ignacio or San Francisco Xavier or Guardian Angel to Santa Lucia. There's just a tremendous difference, a tremendous distinction, basically because /of/ what we offer here. What we're trying to do here is to build a community. And the only way you can build a community is to let people realize; and they have to realize /that/ you just can't say it and have it become a part of a lifestyle, an attitude; you have to build. You have to build /the idea/ that people can be responsible, that individuals have worth, that individuals can share, can give,

can participate, and can have something to offer.

Unfortunately, I think a lot of other churches take it as a kind of a Catholic paternalism--that the padres take care of the people, and the people obey. You know, they're not asked to contribute their ideas or their talents or their abilities. I get very uptight about this, because it was one of the things I realized after having been in Marfa, with that kind of attitude that we had with the people there and which we really built up very, very much. It was a very strong /group/ of people who took responsibility for their church. And, of course, in the Air Force, you were working with people who were responsible. This was part of being in the service. And then I got back here to El Paso and to Santa Lucia where everybody was, "Lo que Ud. diga, whatever you say. If you want this, if you want that, you just tell us and we'll do it." And that's not what we wanted. We wanted people to say, "This is what we want, this is what we think is important, this is what we'd like to have. Can you do it for us? Or can we participate in doing?" And that's what we've done. Sometimes it's kind of sad in a way; and it's changing, thank God, with Bishop Metzger, with the officers we have of youth, with Ruben Garcia and Father Sullivan, /and with/ the education program that the diocese offers with Father Tickle--the whole attitude is really changing. Some churches, of course, are really lagging way, way behind. But it used to be, and in some places it still is, that the only thing the people in the parish would do was to make the tamales or the menudo or to run the booths in the bazaars. It was the only thing that they could participate in, that they could say, "We're doing this for our church. I make tamales. I sell the beer. I run the bingo. That's what I do for my church." And in Santa Lucia, uh, uh! We have our seven commissions, /and/ we're forming

an eighth. There are 35 individuals who were elected at large to be the the responsible individuals to carry on the work. And this is across the board, from community action, finance, liturgy, youth, maintenance, and fellowship. (I can never remember the seven of them when I talk about them.) And the involvement within the Parish Council, the whole attitude is that this is our church, and we're the ones participating. We're the ones actively engaged. We're the ones making the decisions. We're the ones that are very much involved in what happens at Santa Lucia. And Santa Lucia has just rushed for it. It's been a remarkable thing what's occurred here in three years--we don't have enough room for all the people that are coming there. We're jam-packed; but it's because people are actively participating and involved in what happens here. This is not a "Yes, padre, sí padre" situation.

A: How did your family adjust to the situation after they got to the United States?

G: The family background on the part of my grandfather, Francisco Galvan, and my grandmother, Suzanna, was one of wealth, culture, and education. When they got here, they didn't have anything except what they had in their mind and in their hearts, because what little they brought with them was nothing. They lost everything in the Revolution. My grandmother used to tell some great stories of Pancho Villa coming into Santa Barbara and the terror everybody felt; and that people would start rumors that he was coming and everybody would run for their lives. And apparently the trip up here on the train was very hairy. The trip took several days. They were afraid of raids and awful kinds of things. But once they got here and the historical events had occurred, they went looking for jobs. My grandfather worked in a bakery, and he finally owned it. It was called

the Sun Bakery. (The bakery is still there, but it's called something else. It's on the corner of Paisano and Stanton, I think; I'm not sure.) The important thing that I see that occurred was that they instilled in my aunts and uncles, and my father as well, the idea that we were in another country, we had to learn the language, we had to be educated. And they really stressed the education. Considering their financial situation, they would never have become the people they are today if it hadn't been for their own determination.

My uncle Frank, he's an attorney here now. He's been an attorney since the early '30's. He was one of the first Mexican Americans to graduate from the University of Texas Law School. This was in the '30's-- unheard of that a Mexican would be at the Texas University Law School. I think he was the second attorney of Mexican origin in El Paso. I don't know the first one. I can't recall, but I know that Frank was the second. At any rate, when Frank was a young boy of eight, nine, they were selling newspapers on the street corners. World War I was in a sense kind of a help, because the troop trains would come in. And my grandmother would tell me that they'd make sandwiches and things and my aunts and uncles would go to the railroad station and sell them to the troops--anything to bring a little money to the family; and the family cooperated. It was very Mexican in that sense, that everyone worked to help the family. And the older one was sent to school; that was one thing that they absolutely insisted upon. The family did insist upon the education--grammar school, and then to high school. I think most of them went to El Paso High because we lived right there in that Nevada-Campbell area. Frank, being one of the older ones, went on to the university. This was during the Depression, so it wasn't because of their national backgrounds etc. that they

had difficult times, it was practically everybody, unless you had some money at that time. But he went on to law school. Aunt Josephine became a business woman--very successful. My father was in business. He was very much hurt by the Depression, although he died in 1943. I was just a few years old at the time, so I really didn't know him. Another uncle went to law school. By this time, World War II came around and they served in the armed services. When they came back, Bob was one of those who was helped very much by the G.I. Bill. He went to Southern Methodist University. And right now, Bob is a judge--Judge Robert Galvan. My Aunt Julie was one of the first people of Mexican background to go to...at that time I think it was Texas Women's College in Denton. I don't know if it changed names.

A: North Texas State?

G: Maybe. But anyway, she's a teacher, has been a teacher here for many, many years. So overall, the family has been very much education centered and worked centered. They've all been very, very successful. And you really have to hand it to my grandparents, 'cause they were the ones who encouraged and pushed and what not that they do this. They were very ambitious from that point. I often wondered what would have happened had there been no Revolution or had it turned the other way around--what the situation would have been like. On the part of my mother, the Buchanans, I'm Anglo--Scotch English. They settled in the Ysleta area soon after the Civil War. /The marriage between my mother and/ father, that was something, though, because my father had been born in Santa Bárbara (although /he was/ a naturalized citizen). That was kind of a breakthrough. This was the late twenties; they were married /in/ 1929.

A: They were married in México?

G: No, no; here. In fact, they were married in the Mission Our Lady of Mount Carmel. My grandparents lived in Ysleta (that was the Buchanans), and of course, my family lived right downtown. But the wedding usually takes place in the bride's parish, so my mother was married at Mount Carmel. But, I think that created kind of a situation of, "Who is she marrying, a Mexican from El Paso?" But it was a very successful marriage. They had two sons, my brother and I. My brother's an attorney. He's seven years older than I am. We also had one of my aunts in this situation. I think she's the eldest, Helen. She married an Anglo, Dalton Patton, here in El Paso. They moved out to Los Angeles. He was with the police department; he was a detective. Their children also have done well. My cousin, George, is a counselor in the Los Angeles school system. In fact, I was just there Sunday. My cousin Hazel, who also did very well as far as her marriage and family are concerned, was telling me that George is one of the most successful counselors in the Los Angeles high school district. He particularly works in getting scholarship for the students of South Gate High. They have an enviable record at South Gate High because of the enormous amount of work that George does. So it seems like at least in this particular instance of the Galvans and the people we have been associated with, it's a very highly successful record, which I think speaks very highly of the family.

A: When you were young, did you grow up speaking Spanish?

G: No. When I was going to Morehead School, it was still that time when you weren't allowed to speak Spanish on the school grounds or whatever. And I didn't speak any Spanish as a child. In fact, neither did my cousins and what not. The only time we would speak Spanish would be with the maids. I recall that we did have Spanish classes in grammar school. Of

course, I don't know exactly /how/ it is now. I took Spanish in high school, and then in the seminary we took Spanish. So I had some working ability, /but/ very, very poor. As seminarians, a group of us went to México City for two months to study Spanish--that was our purpose. It was the summer of '63; we went to the Instituto Mexicano Norteamericano de Realicones Cultural. You ever heard of it?

A: No.

G: It's called the Institute for short. /Laughter/. It's an intensive Spanish program, two months, and that was a great help. Certainly, when I got to Our Lady of the Light, I had to use Spanish. And then in Marfa, again, that was one of those unique situations. In Marfa the only people who did not speak any English were the viejitos. They were the only ones. So it was just our early morning mass, which is the one that the viejitos liked to come to (they wanted to get back home early), that was in Spanish. When you went to their homes and all, it was very rare that you'd ever hear any Spanish spoken, except to the viejitos and abuelitos. Of course, I didn't speak any Spanish at all in the Air Force. Now here we did.

We were just talking about this the other day. I guess you could say I have the distinction or the honor of celebrating the first mass in Spanish in Alaska. I think I did; I don't know, maybe the Spaniards who were there centuries ago might have done it. But at least in contemporary history, we celebrated a mass in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the 12th of December in Anchorage. I was stationed at Almandorf Air Force Base, and again, it was such a variety of Spanish speaking people in the Air Force--a good number from Puerto Rico, Cuba, México, other Latin American countries, and then Mexican-Americans from the United States. We

knew that there was a good number of these people, but we didn't know many at Almandorf as such, or even in the city of Anchorage; so we announced. We had it in the evening rather than have the mañanitas (early in the morning) in order that more people would come, 'cause we were also going to have a pot luck supper.

So it was announced in the Anchorage newspapers and the news media of Almandorf that a mass in Spanish would be celebrated in honor of the Empress of the Americas, from the tip of Alaska to the tip of South America and all in between. We had something like 300 people. Of course, we didn't know how many people were going to come, but it was really a very happy evening. For a lot of them, it was the first mass in Spanish that they had participated in in years. It was funny, 'cause I couldn't remember any of the hymns. I have a terrible memory to begin with. I can't remember the hymns in English, much less the hymns that I hardly ever sing. So I tried to find a missal in Spanish. I had to call here to El Paso and have some friends send me some things. They didn't arrive in time, so it was kind of a mismatch. We tried the best we could to celebrate the mass in Spanish, and we sang in English because nobody knew the mañanitas and the hymns that pertain to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Spanish. They're part of the Mexican culture. You don't hear them in Puerto Rico, Cuba, or Argentina. You just wouldn't hear them. There weren't that many Mexicans; and then a lot of them being Mexican-Americans, it wasn't part of their real background. But we did the best that we could. And, oh, the food was terrific--such a variety of Hispanic foods.

A: Father, what do you think about the Church getting involved in politics? As an example, you heard a lot about the Church and some of the priests in the other churches in support of the Farah Strike. Not just here, but

in other cities you hear about the Church and politics.

G: Well, it's always a very touchy situation. The Farah Strike had a lot to do with...not so much with the Mexican background, it had more to do with justice. Because the same situation happened before in our history, whether it was the Irish, Chinese, Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, or whatever that have come over and been very much involved in the labor situation. I think, overall, it's just the economic situation here in El Paso that does involve the labor. There are hardly any unions in this area and that's the way a lot of the businessmen would like to keep it. That's one of the reasons why the pay scales here are so low. Then it also has the other side of the coin, that the cost of living here is that much less than it is in some other parts.

But at any rate, it's not so much a question of who gets paid or what not, it's really the question of justice. So if individuals don't have legitimate guaranteed rights and if their life is going to be dependent on the whims of a few individuals, again, it's just up to them. Again, we fall back into this paternalistic situation, which I think was one of the things. I wasn't involved because I wasn't here at that time; I was in the Air Force. Of course, we heard about it and read about it 'cause Bishop Metzger was making news all over the country. And the heart of the situation was justice--what the individual has a right to as a human being, as the Declaration of Independence says, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." So if your life is going to be dangling on the whims of a few people--whether you're going to have a job or not, or you're going to have income or you're going to have benefits, etc.--that's unjust. Things have to be stated and guaranteed--that you have a job, that you have an income, that you have certain rights, that you have

certain guarantees, etc., and not based on just the whims of an individual or a corporate individual. And that's really what the Bishop was getting at, and that's what they were trying to accomplish here.

As far as the politics, we had a little situation here at Santa Lucia. We have our Community Action Commission, and the purpose of it is to enable individuals, members of the community of Santa Lucia and at large, to become more actively engaged in the process of government-- which means that you've got to know what is happening, and who's responsible, and how you can participate, because that is the means of governmental participation in our system. It isn't a matter of how much money or pull you have, it's a matter of how much you can organize to get across what you consider important. The Democratic System works on pressure. And whoever exerts the most pressure gets what /he needs/ or what /he wants/, because it's for the benefit of all, legitimately. So what the Community Action Commission does, for example, we register people to vote, which is our right, it's guaranteed; we ask people to become more aware, knowledgeable of what the situation was, of what the candidates were offering, of what the political parties have to say so that they would know and could vote with more awareness.

A little episode occurred here at the time that we were asking people to register to vote during mass. One of the core members of the Community Action Commission (there are five core members on each commission) got up to make the announcement about registration. I said something to the effect /that/ we have to be impartial, that if you mention one individual's name, in justice you have to mention the other individual's name. You just can't speak of one particular individual to detriment the other candidate. So she got up and she said, "We want everybody to register so that

you can vote November 2, because we want to get Ford out of the White House and we want to vote Carter in." And I just about fell through the floor. [Laughter] And she said, "See, I mentioned both of them." And I said, "Well, that's not exactly what we had in mind, that you would mention them that particular way." Again, here was an instance where we were involved in politics, because for us, politics means being involved and participating--whether it be city hall or the state government or the federal government. And it starts right here.

You know, I was mentioning earlier about the paternalism that exists so much in the Church, where el padre is the one who dictates; "Lo que diga; whatever you say." And if you have that kind of an attitude about yourself (which of course faith is the most personal experience of a human being, between you, the community, and God), this also has its implications to your social life, to your political life--to the rest of your life. And if church just means, "Well, it's just me and God and nobody else, and the priest tells me what to do or how to do it," that's going to affect your whole life, every aspect of it. And at Santa Lucia, we're working it from a totally different perspective, because you can see how we built here at Santa Lucia, through the elective process, which is very democratic. Even ourselves, we're the only Catholic church in El Paso that has a pastoral team. In other words, it's Arturo, Sister Mary Jo, and myself; we act as a threesome, we work in consensus. In other words, we argue, talk, discuss, etc., what we're going to do and how we're going to do it, and we arrive at a consensus. It means no one has the upper hand, but all three participate, all three ideas blend one way or another. And that's the democratic process. We don't say, "We'll do it this way," and, "Your way is wrong,"--we don't do it that way.

We incorporate aspects of the other ideas; that's consensus.

So it starts with the pastoral team; /then/ it's the parish council, it's the core members of the commissions. Already you have 35 individuals elected at large by the whole community. /These are individuals/ who are taking part in the process of the government of this community--what we're going to do, how we're going to do it, who's going to be responsible, who's going to determine it. Already you see that there's an active participatory involvement in the life of the church. This means then the people say, "If I have a say-so in what's going to happen in my community, which is the church of Santa Lucia, I can also have an active involvement in the participation of what's going to happen in my community at large. I can also then participate and have an active input into what's going to happen in this nation. I can also have my input and say-so into what's going to happen in this world." But you see, it has to start. You know you can't talk about peace in the world, or what's happening in Washington, or even what's happening in city hall if you don't have any experience or participation at your most local level, which is, for us as Catholics, the Church.

I was really upset at something that came out in the newspapers the day after the election. In fact, even more upset because they quoted Alicia Chacon, twice, /as saying/, "In some church, the priest was telling the people how to vote." And that really upset me. I wanted to know, first of all, what church, what priest was saying this. I talked to a whole lot of priests in this genre area. We had a genre meeting just a few days after /this happened/, and I asked, "Did any of you say anything about who to vote for?" They said, "No, not at all. We encouraged people to vote. We mentioned that Carter was this, that, and the other; that

Ford was this, that, and the other, etc." But as far as saying, "Vote for this individual and not for another individual," they didn't. So I would like to know very much who Alicia Chacon is referring to. I thought it was kind of strange; not only was she quoted on the front page, but also later on in the same section of the paper it was said again. And I said, "Well, it certainly wasn't here at Santa Lucia."

A: It could happen, especially since the Church has a lot of influence.

G: Well, the influence because of the paternalism: "Bueno, el padre nos va a dirigir."

A: Like you were saying, it's good the way you have it here. Everybody can think for themselves.

G: Absolutely. We have some very good meetings, because people speak their minds. And it's only natural because, again, it's part of this process we have in the United States of America. The people that put themselves out, the people who have some ambition, some determination, will get ahead. You just can't sit back and complain and bitch and carry on about this, that, and the other, without getting involved. When you do /get involved/, even though it's hard, once you're in there, you can. It's like the people who were elected chairpersons of the seven commissions. These were individuals who are leaders, who are people of some ambition, some drive; and naturally they're the ones that come to positions of authority, of more responsibility. But it wasn't because it was a popularity contest or something--who's the handsomest, who's the prettiest, or whatever. /It was people/ who the community at large could see, that really had something that they wanted to share, that they wanted to do, that they wanted accomplish; and it happened. We have a very, very good parish council. The seven people who are on it are all individuals of talent, ambition,

determination, intelligence. It's remarkable. And it strengthens my faith in the democratic process--that the cream really does rise to the top. You know, sometimes people argue, "Well, everybody should have the responsibility, everybody should." Well, yes, everybody has the responsibility to become involved, but that doesn't mean then that everybody will become involved. Well, we all can't be chiefs, there has to be an awful lot of Indians. And while we can all be involved, nobody should then sit back and say, "Well, because I'm not an Anglo," or, "Because I don't have money," or, "Because I'm not important, I don't have a say-so." That's not true.

A: Father Galvan, I'd like to know your opinions or comments on the word "Chicano" and the Chicano Movement itself. What do you think about it?

G: Well, I don't really have any strong opinions one way or the other, namely because I personally am not very much for organizations or groups. I always think of groups, no matter what their intentions or their purpose, as being divisive. I suppose I'm more broad-minded, and, well, while groups are important and are needed, sometimes it can become so exclusive that I think they ruin or handicap themselves.

Let me perhaps give some background. It's like what happened to the Church in its 2000 year history, and so many other movements. You start out with the best intentions and the best of reasons--we want better this, we want better that, we want a whole lot of things. Well, I think you could even say the same thing happened with the Revolution in México, the political situation there. Once this movement gets control, or authority, or power, it seems that instead of progressing, involving and participating, they kind of close in on themselves. They keep the organization--the institution that they have established--going, and their ideals and their

purposes take second place. In other words, the purpose of the group, instead of being what they originally intended and wanted, now becomes the organization, the institution--"We have to keep it going. We have to keep it together." And then their ideals or their motivations are second place. It's like what happened to the Church in the fourth century--we're still having problems. It wasn't so much the attention of the evangelization, or preaching, of teaching, of making individuals worth what they were in relationship to God through Jesus, but it became the institution--

"We have to do everything to keep the institution strong, to keep the institution going, to keep the institution powerful." And /they/ lost track of what the institution was there to do. So, in that sense, it doesn't matter /whether it's/ the political parties, LULAC, Daughters of the American Revolution--you name it. They have great ideals to start out with, but then it happens /that/ they turn in on themselves, and they want to keep themselves going at any cost. And I think this covers my attitudes towards all organization, including the Chicano Movement.

One of the things I see in the Chicano Movement is that it is very splintered, there is no cohesiveness. You know, I sometimes wonder how they all got together to present that program on Channel 9 on Saturday evenings. I haven't seen it too often, but when I have, they list about ten groups that are sponsoring /it/. And I sometimes wonder, who are these ten groups? And why are there ten of them if they're all trying to accomplish the same thing--which is /a/ better life for the people of Mexican background. Why don't they become more involved in doing something like that, rather than splitting themselves up? Because again, Lincoln said it so well, and I think Jesus said it too, "A house divided can't stand." And when you intensify your work within a small group or a group

to the elimination of others, I think you handicap yourself. Because then it's the group that becomes important and not what the group wants to accomplish. But I don't know, it happens, it's just a part of human nature. If it happened to the Church, it happens to all other groups.

I mentioned the situation in México. The PRI has been the power since the Revolution, and yet the ideals of the Revolution and what the Revolution was fought for haven't even been accomplished. Look at the situation now with the campesinos, etc. What was the big cry in 1911? "Land! Land for the peasants, for the farmers!" They still don't have it, and it's been sixty some-odd years since that occurred. I am glad that the Mexican population is asserting itself, but I think it should assert itself within the means that are available--not [by] starting a new group or a new organization or starting something for themselves, but [by] becoming very much involved in what's already happened. The Church is pleading for more priests, bishops' involvement, and participation on the part of the Mexican-American. We have a Diocesan Liturgical Commission. It's made up of priests and religious laymen. We're pleading for people of Mexican origin, Mexican background, to become part of this Liturgical Commission. Now here's a group of people that want that input, that want that participation, and it isn't coming. And [we] keep asking ourselves, "Why?" Well, maybe we're going about it the wrong way, we don't know. But, see, here's an area that's open--the Church. It's open. And why isn't it coming? Why isn't it there? Maybe [there's] a whole other reason that maybe we're not aware of, or haven't been told about. And yet it's like we want the participation, we want the involvement, we want this to happen; and at the moment, it isn't.

A: Well, Father, I want to thank you for this interview. It's been very enlightening.